THE MOST EXCELLENT HISTORY OF Antonius and Aurelia: OR, *The two Incomparable Lovers.*

Wherein is demonſtrated the unparalel'd Conſtancy of true Affection to *Aurelia* by *Antonius*; the many Inevitable Dangers he underwent in the purſuit of her Love; and how in the end he obtained it.

Interlaced with Pleaſant Diſcourſes, Wanton Dalliances, and all the Various Intreagues which attend true Love, when Parents and Friends are obſtructive in the ſame.

Very Pleaſant and Delightful to Read, eſpecially to thoſe whoſe Miſtriſſes are Perverſe and Froward, for hereby, obſerving the Sequel of this Hiſtory, they may by Art and means obtain their Deſires.

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THE

Moſt Excellent HISTORY OF Antonius and Aurelia:

OR,

The Two Incomparable Lovers.

IN Antient times when the Tyrant Vernon had Uſurped to himſelf the Government of the Kingdom of Phrygia, by Murthering his Lawful Soveraign, and imbrewing his hands in the blood of faithful Subjects, there dwelt a certain Noble-man, named Ariſteus, who amongſt many Temporal bleſſings which he enjoyed in abundant meaſure, he had one onely Daughter, named Aurelia, the flower of that Age wherein ſhe liv'd, ſo farſmuch as ſhe did far excell all others of her Sex, as well in the internal qualities and perfections of her mind, as the external feature and comelineſs of her body, which was adorned with a moſt ſweet carriage, and modeſt behaviour.

There likewiſe dwelt ſome two Miles off, another Noble-man, by name Eſculenas, betwixt whom and Ariſteus there had been a great enmity for the ſpace of many years, cauſed by the death of one Bonoſus, a Gentleman that dwelt with Eſculenas, who was in a Quarrel ſlain by ſome that did belong to Ariſteus, and ſuch was the direful effect of that unhappy difference betwixt theſe two, that although many Friends ſought often and diligently to find out ſome way whereby to Unite them in a League of Friendſhip, yet nothing would prevail to make reconciliation betwixt them. Eſculenas had a Son named Antonius whom he dearly loved, for he was every way deſerving, being ſo dutiful to his Parents, ſo reſpectful to his Friends, ſo courteous to Strangers, ſo mild in his Speeches, ſo modeſt in his Carriage,

so comely in Person, and every respect so outwardly accomplish'd, and inwardly qualified, that his Paralel was not to be found. Upon a time it happened that Antonius who delighted much in Hawking, was recreating himself in the fields so long, that he was even weary, wherefore being hot, and espying a pleasant Valley not far off, he walked thither with his Hawk on his fist, intending to repose himself a while in the shade.

He was no sooner set down upon a green Bank, but presently a Pack of Hounds ran by open-mouth'd, being in full Chase after a Stagg, these Hounds did belong to Aristeus, who with many of his friends did then pass by, riding swiftly after the Dogs: when they were gone a pitty distance from him, he sat down again to rest himself, but lifting up his eyes by chance to the top of the Hill, he espyed a fair Damosel leading her Horse down into the same Valley, whereupon he step'd aside into a private place, where he stood unseen, and there beheld the most vertuous Aurelia tying her Horse to a Tree, which being done, she laid her sweet body down upon the tender Grass, and unlaced her Gown a little way to receive in the cool Ayr, the Weather being excessive hot, and she in a great sweat. Antonius who beheld her all the while, thought she did not see him, took great delight in viewing her comely Person, noting well her admirable Beauty and rare Perfections, wherewith his heart was even ravish'd, but upon a sudden the Hawk flutter'd, and with the noise of his Bells made Aurelia start, and looking from whence the noise came she espyed Antonius who lay upon the ground as one asleep, being not willing that she should have any knowledge of his seeing her, but she presently made all the haste she could to lace her Garment, and went towards her Horse, intending to ride away unseen; but Antonius thought it not best to let her depart without speaking to her, therefore rising up, he went and thus saluted her: Most Worthy Lady, let not, I beseech you, my Presence any way disquiet you, neither let my being a Stranger cause you to harbour any suspition of my harmless deportment, for I do assure you, I should think my self happy if with my poor ability I could be any way Serviceable unto you. She hearing his Speeches, made no reply at all, but mounting her Steed rode away, whereat he wondred that she made no Answer, but imputed her silence rather to her fearful disposition, then any discourtesie or want of Breeding.

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Having lost the presence of so lovely an Object, he returned home, and after supper betook him to his Chamber, where he soon found a strange alteration; for, whereas he was wont to take his rest without any disturbance, now he could by no means drive out of his mind, the remembrance of that Lady which he had seen the day before: but various Cogitations filling his Heart, suffered him not to sleep at all, his sences being even captivated by her incomparable beauty, and his affections so enthralled, that he had quite lost all power and command over them.

The next Morning he rose and got himself into the company of his dearest friends, in whose society he was accustomed to take greatest satisfaction, thinking thereby to drive quite out of his remembrance those thoughts which had already procured him so much disquietness. But alas, it was in vain, for their discourse was now unsavory unto him, and he soon grew weary of their company, which heretofore was his delight to enjoy, such a change had one sight of Aurelia wrought in him, that he seemed to himself to be quite another man, his friends endeavoured to drive him out of that Melancholly Posture, but could not prevail, which made them wonder what had happened unto him.

Now it happened that a certain Knight named Pegasius, with whom he was well acquainted, came and entreated his Company the next day, which he yearly solemnized as being his Birth-day, which request Antonius promised to perform, and accordingly he went the next morning, where he was entertained amongst many Knights and Gentlemen, Ladies and Gentlewomen, with a sumptuous Feast and costly Banquet, which being over, the Graver sort of Men, with the Ladies and Gentlewomen, were seated upon a Scaffold erected for that purpose, to behold certain Sports, which were performed by the young Men, as well to exercise themselves and make proof of their Agility of Body, as to delight the eyes of the Spectators: Antonius, though till then he never had made Tryal of his strength and skill in such Exercises, yet he behaved himself so gallantly, that he won the Praise from them all, and was presented to the Duke as Worthy of great Reward; this Duke was he, that out of love to Pegasius, who had heretofore been his servant, was at the whole Charge of that Annual Solemnity: when the Sports were ended, and the Spectators rising to depart, Antonius casting up his eye by chance, he espyed

espyed Aurelia whom he very-well knew again by her favour, wherefore he desired of Pegasius to know who she was; Pegasius told him it was the Daughter of Aristeus, who together with her Father and Mother, came that day to Honour him with their presence.

Antonius was somewhat comforted with beholding her, and gaining that little knowledge of the place where she lived, yet he was much troubled at the Consideration of her being the Daughter of Aristeus, who he well knew hated his Father, and in all probability would no ways approve of him, so that he was pelleted with a mixture of fear and hope, revolving in his mind what a matter of difficulty it would be to gain her favour with such secresie as that it might not come to her Friends hearing, who he thought would never give their consent: sometimes again he thought it might be the readiest way to procure a reconciliation betwixt their two Families, yet because he knew Aristeus to be of a harsh stubborn nature, he feared that would not be effectual, neither so, that he was even ready to dispair of ever attaining to his desire; yet finding his affections to grow stronger, & his love to encrease more and more, he resolved to put his intentions into practice and try his fortune by endeavouring to win her Love, and to that end, he rose early next morning, and walking towards the place where he had the first sight of Aurelia, he met by the way an ancient Gentlewoman named Milania, who was of good education, though but mean in Ability, she did very much frequent Arbastus his house, and was then going thither: Antonius seeing her alone, and not knowing but she might be a means of furthering his purpose, saluted her with these words: Mistris, if it be no offence or any way troublesome to you, I would demand of you one Question: Pray Sir (quoth she) without any further Apology, speak your Will, and I am ready to satisfie you in what I can: Do you (quoth he) know Aristus? yes that I do (quoth she) and am very well acquainted at his house, whether I am now going, so would I go too (said he) if I durst, for I belong to Antonius, Son to Esculenus, of whom I conceive you have heard, and might I receive your promise of secresie and fidelity, I would reveal a secret unto you, wherein you may I suppose, do my Master a great Courtesie, and be gratefully recompensed for your pains.

Sir, (said she) I do not know Antonius, but I have heard great Commendations of him, and if it lies in my power to do him any Service, I will not be wanting in my endeavours, but strive with

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the utmost of my ability to satisfie his Lawful requests, so having taken her Oath to be secret, he thus proceeded.

It chanced that my Master sitting to rest himself in yonder Valley, beheld the fair Aurelia, by the sight of whose Beauty he was quite vanquished, and thoroughly viewing her perfections, he became so enamoured of her, that unless there be a speedy remedy found out to ease him of that trouble he undergoes, I fear it will cost him his life: you are the person that may do him a pleasure in revealing his love to Aurelia, which I shall refer wholly to your managing, desiring you to effect the same in such a manner as by your prudence you shall be guided, and I know my Master will acknowledge himself much obliged to you for any pains you take in his behalf.

Sir (said she) because I have some ground to believe that his Love is real, and his meaning Honourable, not having any sinister end in pretending that which indeed is not his intent, I shall therefore engage my self to make known his humble suit to Aurelia, and with the best of my skill strive to further the same, and if I cannot attain to my wish in working his contentment, I shall use as much secresie as can be desired or expected, and if you please to come to me to morrow morning, you shall have an account of my proceedings, for which Antonius gave her thanks and so departed. But when he was out of her sight, he began to accuse himself of too much Rashness, in committing a matter of such great Importance to the privacy of a stranger, fearing lest Aurelia would not give Credit to his Speeches, but account him as an Enemy, yet he did again comfort him self with hopes of receiving encouragement by her favourable answer to his suit.

Melania being come to the Court, diligently watched her opportunity of gaining a fit time and occasion to speak to Aurelia, and being in the Garden after dinner, they fell into discourse concerning the Names of several Herbs and Flowers; amongst which there was one which Aurelia said was call'd Love in Jolenes, or Hearts-ease, at the uttering of which words Melania fetch'd a deep sigh which Aurelia taking notice of, demanded of her why she sigh'd: Because (quoth she) there is such a vast difference between those two Names, that they are very unfitly given both to one Herb, and hereby, which is the cause of my sighing, I call to mind the great Lamentation which a Youngman made in my hearing, whose sorrow was procured by Love, not in Jolenes, but I think in good Earnest. Why (quoth Aurelia) can

Love

Love be a means of such grief to any, and not rather of Joy and Content? Yes, (quoth Melania) because the person loving hath little hopes of gaining the favour of her whom he so intirely loves. Then quoth Aurelia, I account him very unadvised that will so deeply place his affections where there is such an unequality, as excludes him from all probability of having his Love answered with a return of the like again; but I pray tell me how came you to be admitted so quickly into the secrets of any Person? I was not admitted, quoth Melania, but chanced to hear his Complaints e're he was aware of me, which afterwards I promised not to make known to any, but the Lady whom he so dearly loveth: then it seems (quoth Aurelia) I must not know, neither indeed do I care, for it is but a meer Vanity which disquieteth ones mind with distracting thoughts: Yes (quoth Melania) you both may and shall if you please, know the party, so you will promise not to be displeased with me for telling you, nor yet reveal what I shall impart unto you: Why, quoth Aurelia, I hope I am not so nearly concerned therein, as that I should be any whit offended: If I be I pray keep your secrets unrevealed, and trouble not me with such unrelishing discourse, for I am not disposed to give any Audience to the fond speeches of doting Lovers: truly quoth Melania) in my judgement you give too harsh a censure of Love, which indeed is one excellent Quality, whereby a Man or Woman is distinguished from other Creatures, and without which the world could not consist, therefore not to be disesteem'd, and if any one Love your self with a vertuous well-grounded Affection, should you make an ill construction thereof, and not rather Answer it with kindness again, it being accounted a monstrous thing in Nature not to love them that love us, but return Hatred for Love: you indeed are the Party beloved, and it is by one of whom I could say much, but I shall be silent in his Commendations, and forbear to mention his Name, and then I hope your chaste Ears will not be offended with my Discourse.

Do so then (quoth Aurelia) and if hereafter you expect to be welcome into my Company, forbear to utter any expressions of the like Nature: Had I thought (quoth she) this would have been any way unpleasing, I would not have used that privilege which you gave me to speak what I knew, however for the future, I shall forbear, so they departed, Melania to her Mould, and Aurelia to her Lodging, where she began a little to muse of the discourse which had passed between them,

them, but passing over those thoughts slightly, she gave her self to repose, and slept the greatest part of the Night very quietly.

The next Morning very early, Antonius repaired to Melanias House, with a longing expectation of knowing what success his Suit had obtained, she was not up at his coming, but having intelligence that he was there, she quickly went down and acquainted him with all that had passed betwixt her and Aurelia, whereat he was inwardly much perplexed, but she used many perswasions to keep him from despairing of enjoying his wishes, though he had received such a strong repulse at first, giving him hopes, that in time her mind might alter from that which at present seemed to be her Resolution, for which comfortable hopes he return'd her thanks, and gave her a Purse full of Gold as a reward for the pains she had already taken, and to allure her to persist further in pleading for him, he said as followeth.

Good *Melania*, let not *Aurelia*'s first frown so dismay you, as that you should through fear desist from prosecuting my Suit, for I am not *Antonius* man, but *Antonius* himself, who endureth much sorrow, in that I am debared from the happiness of speaking to her my self in my own behalf, through the continual discord which is nourished by our Parents, therefore seeing I am destitute of any means or likelihood of pleading in my own Cause, I beseech you once more to make a further proof of your Skill, in speaking what you shall think most convenient to further my Suit.

Sir, (said she) I would gladly put in practice any thing, within the Limits of my Power, thereby to purchase your content, but I fear that *Aurelia*'s frowardness is such, that she will not be attentive to any thing I say, though urged with never so much reason, if it be not agreeable to her will, yet if you will be pleased to give me your advice what course is best to take, I will once more hazard the loss of her Friendship for your sake. Whereupon Antonius wrote a Letter, and desired her to convey it by some means or other to her sight, the Contents were as followeth.

To the most Vertuous *Aurelia*:

SWeet Lady, let me not I beseech you, be condemned as guilty of too much rashness or boldness, in presuming to make this

humble addreſs unto you, but rather make a favourable conſtruction of my good meaning herein, for being bound to honour your vertuous ſelf, I thought it moſt expedient to acquaint you therewith, deſiring that you will by a kind entertainment of my Suit, eaſe me of that grief wherewith my heart is burthened through fear of your diſdain, I muſt confeſs you may alledge many things, as Reaſons to diſſwade you from believing the reality of my Expreſſions, or affording me the leaſt ſhare of your favour, yet I beſeech you, make but tryal of my Loyalty, and you ſhall find the true heart of a conſtant friend, under the Veil of a ſuppoſed Enemy; I am not able to expreſs what a deep Impreſſion your beauty and vertue hath made in my Breaſt, neither can I uſe any Language which may be of more force to perſwade you to give Credit to my Speeches, then by entreating you to imploy me in your Service, and ſo to eſteem of me as you ſhall by experience be ſurely confirmed in your good opinion of my faithfulneſs and conſtancy, it lies in your power either to kill me, or prolong my life: Oh! let not Cruelty lodge within the Cloſet of your tender heart, but vouchſafe to pitty him, whoſe Safety, Comfort, and Preſervation, conſiſts in your owning him for your Servant, ſhew your favour to an undeſerving, unknown friend, ſo ſhall you lengthen out days of a Languiſhing Lover, and oblige me to ſtudy all my life time how I may merit ſo great Honour as your kind acceptation of my Service will procure me, in hopes of receiving Encouragement by your Anſwer, I reſt

Your Devoted Servant,

Antonius.

Melania having received this Letter, promiſed it ſhould be carefully delivered, ſo the next day ſhe went to Ariſteus houſe, and being with Aurelia in her Chamber, ſhe eſpyed her Caſket ſtand open, into which ſhe conveyed the Letter, whilſt Aurelia was imployed about other buſineſs, and ſoftly ſhut the Lid down, making all the haſte ſhe could to be gone, for fear Aurelia ſhould find the Letter whilſt ſhe was there: when Night was come, Aurelia being alone in her Bed, took a Book in her hand intending to read a while, but on a ſudden ſhe fell aſleep, and was poſſeſt with a Dream, that *Melania* was uſing ſuch Speeches as had the other day been ſpoken by her, at which Aurelia was very angry, and ſwelled in her ſleep to chide *Melania* ſoundly, that

ſhe

she thereupon waked, wondring at her drowsiness, in that she had forgot to put out the Candle, and Melanias Words concerning one that should so dearly love her, coming afresh into her mind, she marvelled who it should be, yet desiring to think no more of it, she strove to free her mind from such Cogitations, but all her striving would not prevail, for the more she endeavoured to suppress those thoughts, the stronger they grew, whereupon laying aside her Book, she stept out of Bed to her Casket with intent to take her Sampler, and make use of her Needle, wherein she took much delight, but as soon as she had opened her Casket, she espyed the Letter, and admiring what should be the Contents, or how it should come there, she read the Superscription, and thought to look no further into it, but throw it away, which her heart would not suffer her to do till she had opened it to view the inside, but striving to over-master her affections, she tare it in the middle, yet when she had done so, she was angry with her self that she had not first seen the Contents, therefore laying the two pieces together before her, she read it all over, which being done, she uttered these Expressions: Ah me! what strange News is this? Was it Antonius that she spake of? can he pretend to be my friend, who is without all doubt my professed Enemy? Can there be any good in his intention towards me; no surely, it is some politick device of his to entreat me, thereby to work my Ruine: Was it he that saw me in the Valley? or is it probable that upon such a small sight he should be so far in love with me? No, I will never believe it, but still account him as my Enemy, and quite abandon Melanias Company, whose device it was to put this Letter here: then tearing it in a hundred pieces, she would not yield to the least thought of Love, but forced as much as she could the remembrance thereof out of her mind, yet could she take little rest that Night, but spent many hours in various Cogitations.

When Morning was come she arose and soon met with Melania, who came expecting to know what effect her Project had taken, and finding a fit opportunity when no body was there, she Schooled her in this manner: Melania, I wonder what folly ruleth your mind, that leads you so far beyond the bounds of reason; I have not carried my self so unkindly towards you, as to merit such a requital of my Love, I always esteemed you to be a Person vertuously given, but I fear I have been mistaken, else you would never go about to undermine my

Honour and betray it into the hands of such a person; I told you when we were talking in the Garden, that I would have you forbear to disquiet my mind with any such unsavory Language, which you then seriously promised to do, but have proved your self unfaithful in attempting to effect the same thing by a more secret and dangerous way, if your Immodesty would not permit you to desist from such unworthy undertakings, you might have given the Letter into my hand, and not under pretence of Friendship, sell me to one that intends nothing else but to intrap my Chastity, and procure my Misery, for I shall ever account him as my Enemy, and hereafter I pray come not into my Company, for I'le speak to my Father to forwarn you his House. Melania would have answered, but she went hastily away, refusing to hear her, whereupon being very much griev'd, she departed to her House.

The next Morning Antonius repair'd to Melanias House to hear what News, and finding her weeping for anger and veration, he demanded how she had sped the day before, then she related unto him every passage and Circumstance of the whole matter, whereat he was struck to the heart with such a load of sorrow and grief, that without speaking one word he departed, and getting into a secret place, bewail'd with bitter sighs and tears, his lamentable estate, in being so unfortunate as to place so much Love upon one that was regardless of his Misery, and disdain'd his Suit, yet because he knew that he must either purchase her favour or lose his life, he resolved to make tryal of his skill in a further attempt, with hopes of better success.

So resolving in his mind many things, and musing what should be the reason of her strangeness, in so utterly refusing to give credit to his words and protestations, he was at length verily perswaded that it was only his Name which procured her distrust of his good meaning, because thereby he was considered of in the quality of an Enemy, wherefore he concluded, that if he could find out a way to prefer his Suit under another Name, and in the likeness of another person, it were both possible and probable for him to attain his wishes, and hereupon with all the expedition that might be, he began to put his intended design in execution, and to that end, he attired himself in the habit of a Virgin come from a strange Country, and taking his Lute in his hand, on which he could play singular well, he repaired to the Sea-side in the Night time, unseen by any, and as soon as the light

light began to appear, next morning he sat him down on a Bank and plaid most sweetly on his Lute, which a poor old Shepherd that kept Sheep near that place chanced to hear, and admiring at the rarity of the Musick, he went to see from whence the Harmony came, and being guided by the sound, he soon espyed Antonius in the similitude of a Damosel newly come from some far Country; whilst he stood listening to the Musick, and gazing upon him, Antonius spake as followeth.

God Father, marvel not at such an unusual sight, for it seemed good to the Fates, that being long tossed upon the Waves, after suffering Ship-wrack, I should be cast upon this shore alive, yet being far from any friends, and in an unknown Land, I am likely to perish here for want of comfort, being destitute of all means whereby to help my self, therefore I beseech you take pitty on my [illegible] condition, and if it be in your power, yield me some relief, that my [illegible] may be preserved; To whom the Shepherd replyed: Fair Damosel, such entertainment as my poor Ability will afford, you shall be welcome to, and I shall be glad to do you any good that lies in my power, therefore I pray you walk with me to my House without any more entreaty, where you shall be kindly welcome. Antonius gave him many thanks, and accepted of his Courteous invitation, following him to his Cottage, where being entred, the Shepherd related to his Wife the Misfortunes of the Damosel, and what he had promised to do for her; whereupon the Woman bad her welcome, and in a loving homely way expressed much kindness, setting before the supposed Virgin, such fare as was in the house, which Antonius thankfully received, and being refreshed therewith, began to relate the reasons of his undertaking a Voyage by Sea, naming the place from whence he came, the Haven where he intended to Land, the dangers that he went through, and the manner of the Ship-wrack he suffered, with many other strange passages which were so subtilly contrived, so seriously expressed, so politively affirmed, and so neatly shadowed over with a Colour of seeming truth, that Persons of a far more discerning judgement, might have been easily perswaded to believe all was truth he said, and by reason of his Youth none could in that Habit mistrust his being any other than a young Virgin as he seemed; he told them moreover, that his Name was Thalia, by which Name for a while we must call him.

Having

Having continued two days at the Shepherds House, without any likelihood of seeing Aurelia, it chanced that upon the third day Aristeus as he rode a Hunting, was fortunately driven by a sudden storm, to seek shelter at the Shepherds house, where without any knocking, he boldly went in, and espying only Thalia, he wondred very much to find a Damosel so Fair and so richly attir'd in such a poor Cottage, wherefore he thus Salutes her.

Sweet Virgin, I beseech you excuse me if I have any way interrupted you by my rash and sudden approach into your presence, for I little thought to have met so beautiful a Virgin in so homely a Cottage: Thalia knowing him to be Aristeus, arose from her seat, but answered not a word, immediately the Shepherd and his Wife came in, and with much reverence and submissive respect, expressed their gladness of being honoured with the presence of so worthy a Person as Aristeus, the Shepherd relating unto him what he knew concerning Thalia, which caused Aristeus to utter these Speeches.

Fair Damosel, I understand by the Shepherds words that you have undergone great Misfortunes, which moves me to a Compassionate affection of your Sorrows, and I promise you I will do what lies in me to procure your content, and forasmuch as I suppose your breeding and education hath been so honourable, as that this homely Cottage is far unmeet to entertain you, I pray go home with me and receive such entertainment as my house affordeth, unto which you shall be freely Welcome.

Thalia glad of the proffer, yet unwilling to give him any cause to suspect her by an overforwardness in accepting of his Courtesie, made this reply: Worthy Sir, I cannot tell how to acknowledge my self sufficiently thankful unto you for this undeserved favour, in vouchsafeing such kindness to me, who am a stranger and brought to Misery, wherefore I think this mean place is suitable to my present low condition, yet because I am burthensome to these good people, and know not how to recompence their kindness already shewn me, and since you are pleased so far to condescend as to desire me to accept of your free proffer, I do most willingly yield thereunto, and confess my self infinitely obliged to you for your Love: Many the like Speeches past on either side, and at length Thalia went with Aristeus to his Castle, where he was kindly entertained, and by his sweet disposition and mild behaviour, he grew into favour with all the Houshold, Aurelia

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her self was so taken with his Carriage, that she much affected his Company, and he had his hearts desire in viewing the beauty, and enjoying the presence of Aurelia, growing daily more enamoured of her, and taking such sweet delight in the Contemplation of her divine perfections, that no thoughts were pleasing to him but the remembrance of her.

By this time the news of Antonius sudden departure, was blazed abroad, and came to Melanias ears, who hearing of the grievous Lamentations his Parents made, fearing he was come to some untimely end; she carried the report to Arilleus House, and entring the Garden where Aurelia was walking with Thalia, she could not forbear to express her mind, but spake as followeth

Aurelia, I entreat you not to take any distast at what I say, but if you will be angry, let it be with your self, who have been the cause of a young-mans undoing, for Antonius whom you esteemed as an Enemy, though a most truly friend, and real Lover of yours, laying to heart your disdainful refusal of his Suit, despaired of ever enjoying any Comfort in this life, and therefore hath either made away himself, or else is gone to lead a solitary life in some strange place, far from the knowledge of his Parents, Friends, and Relations; how can you excuse your self from hard-heartedness, and too much unkindness in procuring the misery of so Worthy a Gentleman, who was in all points so deserving, and whose Love was so Constant and Innovceable. Many the like expressions she used, which struck Aurelia into a dump that she knew not what to say, for she was by her own Consciente accused of too much Cruelty, and she could not in reason blame Melania who had spoken what was truth, and moreover she knew, that notwithstanding her own harsh Speeches before towards Melania, there was some small sparks of Love kindled in her Breast, that could not well be concealed; as she stood musing thus betwixt hope and fear, the Water appeared in her eyes, being scarce able to contain her self from waping, which exceedingly reforted Antonius his heart to see her begin to relent, and fain he would have spoken, but being in that disguise, he durst not reveal himself, lest it might be prejudicial to his design. Melania having uttered her mind, and seeing Aurelia much perplexed, she her self also being extreamly grieved for the young-mans hard fortune, ceased to use any more words, but departed out of the Garden, and Aurelia withdrawing her

self

self from Thalia's Company into an Arbour, fell into a serious consideration of that which she had said and done in reference to Antonius, sometimes blaming her self for giving such harsh Answers, and flat denials to his reasonable requests, other while fearing it might be a subtile device of Melanias on purpose to try her, but in the Conclusion, the expressions which proceeded from her tongue, did in a manner give certain testimonies that she in heart repented of what she had done, and gave Antonius, who had hid himself secretly within hearing of her words, comfortable hopes of attaining her Love, but seeing her ready to rise up and come out of the Arbour, he soon conveyed himself into the place where she left him, where there past many words betwixt them; Aurelia supposing him to be what he seemed, no other then Thalia a Virgin, began to explain more fully the meaning of such Speeches as Melania had used to her, relating the whole business concerning the Love which Antonius professed towards her, and how she reputed him an Enemy only in this respect, because there was so great enmity betwixt their Parents, otherwise she had heard a good report of his Vertuous disposition, and rare Endowments wherewith Nature had adorned him; this pleased Thalia exceedingly to hear, and sitting in a fine shady place, he took his Lute and played most sweetly; Aurelia being much delighted with the Musick, so that when he gave over she would desire him to continue playing, which he did so long, that she fell into a slumber, and her eyes being closed, he took an occasion of viewing her matchless beauty, and exactly noted the most exquisite Composure of every visible part, wherewith her Person was so incomparably adorned; at length she awaking, thanked him for his sweet Musick, which had much eased her mind by a quiet repose: and Night now drawing on, Thalia was forced, though with much unwillingness, to lose the presence of Aurelia, which was even as dear to him as his life: When he was alone by himself, he recounted in his mind those speeches which he had heard concerning himself, and was in a wilderness of doubts to what event things would come, sometimes fearing she was in hopes never to see her again, other while comforting himself with the remembrance of her sad complaint which she made against her self for affording him so much unkindness, in a disdainful repelling of his Suit, such a Labyrinth of perplexity did these contrarities of thoughts, of doubtful thoughts call him, that he seemed as a Man round beset with sorrows, and

destitute

destitute of all Comforts, uttering many sad and doleful complaints, bewailing his unhappiness, and lamenting his wretched estate; often did he think of making known himself unto her, but then again he fear'd lest thereby he should lose that privilege which he now enjoyed in that disguise; at length overmastering his fears with the hopes of being pitied by her, he resolv'd to write his mind, and leave it in such a place where she might be sure to find it, then putting Pen to Paper, he wrote as followeth.

To the most Incomparable Lady *Aurelia*, the poor distressed *Antonius* Humbly presents these Breathings of his heart.

Sweet Pearl of Beauty,

CAn it enter into the belief of any, that cruelty lodgeth in your tender Breast, or that your heart, the sole harbourer of all vertuous qualities, should be destitute of pitty? Ah! no, I will never cease to extol your Fame, wholly laying the blame upon my unhappy Fates, who envying my felicity, to deprive me of any hopes of comfort, have defamed me with the false Title of an Enemy, but the Heavens can witness my Loyalty, and with what vehemency of desires my heart longeth to evidence my love and duty, which I have devoted to your sacred person, I cannot fix credence to my words, nor paint over flattering speeches with such colours as bear the resemblance of truth, but I do unfeignedly protest, that my love is vertuous, constant, and imoveable, not to be extinguished by disdain, not to be altered by distance of place, nor worn out of remembrance by continuance of time: I beseech you therefore, shew some compassionate kindness to him that waits to receive the sentence of life or death from your lips, let mercy take place, and save me alive: So shall you gain a Servant who will study all his life time to requite your favour: I have forsaken my Parents and Friends, only to purchase your acceptance of my Service: When I was *Esculenus* Son, I was despised and accounted your enemy, but now I am not *Esculenus* Son, nor *Antonius*, let me obtain favour at your hands; So shall you restore me to a joyful and happy estate, and by your pitty in preserving my life, eternize your own memory to all posterity: Thus, with the tender of my true respects unto you, I commit my Cause wherein my safety depends, to your wise Consideration:

Yours, or not his own, *Antonius*.

When he had thus written, he sealed it up and laid it in the Garden, in a Walk to which Aurelia daily repair'd, and going to her Chamber, he found her ready to come down; after she had welcomed Thalia her supposed Gentlewoman, she went with her into the Garden, where walking a while, Aurelia espyed the white Paper, which she took up, and reading the Superscription, marvelled from what hand it came, or who laid it there; then calling Thalia unto her, she said, Do you see this? I wonder how it came hither, or what the Contents may be, it is directed to me, and therefore I will open and read it, and you shall hear the same as well as I; when she had perused it quite over, and saw that it was from Antonius, she fetched a deep sigh, saying, now I perceive Antonius was not so void of reason and wisdom as to make away himself, but will make a further tryal of me, e're he will give over his Suit for labour lost; this I dare say was Melanias doings, I perceive they are agreed, well my mind is much troubled, I pray'e Thalia let me have thy advice what is best for me to do, for I will resolve upon nothing till I know thy judgement concerning the thing, to whom Thalia replyed; Madam, since you are pleased to have so favourable opinion of me, as to conceive my Counsel may be available unto you, and have given me free liberty to express my thoughts, I shall briefly tell you what I think: first, If Antonius doth so really Honour, Love, and Respect you as he protesteth, you have all the reason in the world to entertain his Suit, and recall your harsh censure, for thereby you shall not only save his Life and purchase to your self a sure Friend, but also procure a perpetual reconciliation betwixt your two Families; secondly, For Melania, she did but a friendly part if it were of her doing, which I hardly believe, because she was not here since yesterday: Again, in my opinion all the speeches and expressions of Antonius seem to proceed from the very bottom of his heart, so that I am perswaded all his vows and protestations are real, and free from Dissimulation and Falshood. Therefore, if I may advise you, so far as you may be assured of his vertuous and honourable meaning, yield to his requests, and release him from that thraldome wherein he lies languishing, which will be a deed of true pity.

Would you, quoth Aurelia, have me consent to love mine enemy? How can he be your Enemy said Thalia, when he so dearly loveth you? you have no other reason in calling him so, but the discord betwixt your Parents, which hinders not the Children in the least from bear-

ing true affection one to another: and further, here is an evident proof of his vertuous inclination, in as much as because he knows you worthy to be beloved, he therefore will love you though his Parents hate you: Many the like powerful arguments Thalia used to prove the certainty of Antonius love towards her, and to move her to entertain favourable constructions of his good meaning, whereupon Aurelia seeing how like a Counsellor she pleaded in his cause, said as followeth: Indeed Thalia, Antonius hath a good Orator to speak for him in his absence, I asked thy advice and thou hast therewith joyned perswasion, but seeing thou art so desirous of my good, which I hope is the end thou aimest at, if thou wilt promise secresie, I will acquaint you with my mind and intentions; you may rest assured (quoth Thalia) that I will be faithful unto you in whatsoever you entrust me withal: then said she) I confess unto thee, that I do both love Antonius, and am desirous to grant his requests, but I fear there will be so many impediments and obstacles in the way, that I shall never enjoy him, for should my Parents have the least inclination of such a thing, they would be so strict in watching over me, that I fear I shall scarce attain to one sight of him whom I greatly long to see. Never fear, (quoth Thalia) but you may both see and enjoy him, for you loving him, and he not only equalling, but exceeding you in affection, the business will more easily be effected, and could I but come once to the Speech of him, I question not but I should with secresie and sincerity procure both your contentments; well then (said Aurelia) putting sure confidence in thy fidelity, and not in the least distrusting thy faithfulness, I commit my love, my life, and all to thy Prudence, being willing to follow thy directions in yielding to any thing that may not impair my honour, or be inconsistent with vertue: When they had ended their discourse, being ready to depart, Melania entred the Garden, whereupon Aurelia began presently to chide her, using sharp reproofs, & accusing her of dissimulation, also taxing her with the conveyance of that Letter into the Garden, and of being privy to Antonius departure, whom she conceived did privately lodge at her house; Melania extreamly marvelled to hear such speeches, and did with Solemn protestations avouch her ignorance of those things which Aurelia laid to her charge, affirming that she had not seen Antonius since he came to know what success the Letter had which she conveyed into her Casket, adding further, that she fear'd it was not so well with him

as to be so near at hand; Aurelia hearing her speeches, gave credit to her protestations, and could not contain her self from shedding some tears, which serv'd only to usher in a far greater showre of rain, for at that instant one of the Servants came running in all post haste to Aurelia, telling her in doleful words, a sad Tragical Story, how that her Father riding out that morning a Hunting, was on a sudden mist, whereupon his men riding several ways in search of him, at length he was found in a Wood hard by grievously wounded and dead, at which words she fell down in a swound, ready to give up the Ghost, but Thalia took her up in his arms, rubbing her pale Cheeks till she began to revive again, then they convey'd her to bed, but she was brought by the extreamity of her grief into such an Agony, that it was fear'd she would scarce ever recover her health again, which fill'd Thalia with sorrow and inward perplexity; the whole house at this sudden news was presently in an uproar, wailing and lamenting Aristeus death, every one giving their opinion concerning the murther, and it was generally conceiv'd, that it was done by the procurement of Esculenus in revenge of his brothers death. Aristeus Wife laid the loss of her dear husband so to heart, that within few days she dyed. Aurelia likewise had followed them both, had she not been carefully and diligently tended by Thalia and Melania, by whose assistance and counsel she was preserved alive: the report of this strange accident was quickly noised abroad all about the Country, but there being no certain knowledge of the murtherer, it past unquestioned: Duratus began now to take possession of his Brothers Lands and Livings, and having honourably buried him and his Lady, he erected stately Monuments in remembrance of them, often visting Aurelia, and with kind expressions of his tenderness towards her, he seemed to be studious of her welfare, and did often promise he would be unto her in the stead of a Father, giving order to her attendants, that she should want nothing which might any way conduce to her speedy recovery from that sorrowful sickness which seiz'd upon her, and whereby she was brought into such a weak estate. Thalia was not a little grieved to see his Love in that condition, yet it was some comfort that he had the privilege of being continually with her, never departing out of her Chamber day nor night, but taking pains and using his utmost diligence to pleasure her, whereby he grew in such esteem with her, that she took much delight in his company, still supposing him to be a Virgin as he seem'd; Thalia

would

would oftentimes steal a sweet kiss from Aurelias Lips, which she thought was out of extraordinary kindness, and took it in good part: but being somewhat recovered, she marvelled Thalia would so often get into some secret place, and there bewail his condition with heavy sighs, and doleful lamentations: one time above the rest, Aurelia chanced to hear him say; Oh how great misery do I endure, in placing my affections on one that repays my love with disdain: more he was about to say, but espying her he ceased: whereupon Aurelia spake as followeth: Why how now Thalia, are you bitten by that poysonous Serpent Love, that enemy to tranquillity and contentment? which disquiets the mind, changeth the complexion, troubleth the head and heart, and disturbs all the senses: fie, fie, shake it off quickly, lest it bring you into such a Labyrinth of sorrow as you will never be able to get out of it: To which words of hers Thalia made this answer: Madam, I should wrong my self if I should say I were not in love, yet I le assure you that hath wrought in me no such strange effects as you speak of, but I have enjoyed much felicity thereby, and all my senses have been exceedingly rejoyced thereby: How comes it then to pass (said Aurelia) that you sit in such a melancholly posture, as if you did lament your being in Love? It doth not trouble me at all (qd. Thalia) that I am in love, but I am not beloved again, for I have resolved to persist in loving so long as I live. What Man can be so void of pitty (said Aurelia) that knowing you love him, will not vouchsafe you love again? 'Tis indeed strange (qd. Thalia) but truly thus the case stands with me, the person whom I love knoweth it very well, and yet disdains, and even hates me without any just cause: neither am I far distant from my Belovedes company, which is the only support of my life. It should then seem by your talk (said Aurelia) that the party you love is in this house, is it possible your fancy should be so quickly enshared, and your heart captivated in the short space you have been here: Pray, if you dare confide in my secresie, make me acquainted with the party, and I will do what lies in my power to further your love. I most humbly thank you (qd. Thalia) and you may do more therein then any other can: yet with your pardon, before I reveal my mind, I would crave leave to ask you one question. Name it (quoth she) and I will answer you. I desire, qd. Thalia, to know whether you love Antonius, yea or no? Love Antonius, said she, ah woe is me, that very name cuts me to the heart, dost thou think I have

reason:

reason to love him, and not rather to hate him above all others? who hath brought me to this misery, for without question it was either he, or some other imployed by him, that murthered my Father, therefore I do hate and abhor the very remembrance of him, his very name terrifies me, and if thou hadst loved me as I thought thou didst, thou wouldst have forborn to mention it. Yet to see the villany and perjury of base Men, how did he with feigned protestations sue for my love, and had gone so far that my heart began to give consent to his requests, which would have proved my utter ruine if he had attained his ends. Thalia was so fully possest with grief to hear these speeches, that she burst forth into tears, and being about to speak, was prevented by Duratus coming to visit Aurelia, who as his custom was, abounded in loving expressions, and pretended kindness, protesting to be as desirous of her welfare as his own good, advising her not to let immoderate grief remain in her heart, which would be a means to prolong her Malady, but that she would be chearful, as heretofore she us'd to be: after many speeches to this purpose, they departed, and at night when Antonius was alone, he call'd to mind Aurelias Words, which put him into an utter despair of ever obtaining his desires, all the comfort which he had left him was, that he might enjoy the sight and presence of his beloved Lady. In this condition and disguise continued he till Aristeus death was almost worn out of memory, in which time Duratus began to affect Thalia the supposed Damosel, and by degrees fell so deep in love, that he could no longer conceal it: whereupon he took occasion to acquaint her therewith, and desired that she would grant him her favour. Thalia laughing in himself at the conceit, and well considering that such a project might further him in his love to Aurelia, gave him such answers as encouraged him to continue his suit, not making him a full grant of her love, but holding him in dispence to get what she could out of him: and being possest with thoughts, coming as it were by extraordinary providence into her mind, that Duratus might be privy to the murther of his brother Aristeus, she intended to sift him through, that if it were possible the truth of all might be found out, and to that end, when he continued his importunity in urging her to give him some promise of her love, she would still alledge his want of means & ability to maintain her, telling him the estate which he possest belonged to Aurelia, and that he could not claim it as his inheritance, putting him off with such delays the better to bring her purpose about:

bout: which enflamed his heart more exceedingly, thinking that if he could get that obstable removed out of the way, that is to say, his want of wealth, then he should quickly obtain his desire; and being hardned in mischief, he resolved to attempt any thing that might further him in his unlawfull enterprize. Therefore coming to Thalia, and using many prelling arguments to move her to yield to his demands, which she feignedly seemed willing to consent unto, if he could assure her of any wealth he had of his own: he told her that he had a secret to impart unto her, which if she would swear to conceal, he would make her acquainted with it. She protested that she would faithfully conceal whatsoever he should say: Then he opened his mind, telling her that he had an intent to make away Aurelia, by removing her to a private Lodge in her Fathers Park, pretending her health therein, and it might easily be effected, if she would take the performance in hand, for he would order her to attend continually upon her, and he would provide such a drink that she should give Aurelia, that would suddenly dispatch her, and none could never know but that she dyed of some Natural Distemper.

Thalia trembling to hear this Tragical story design'd against the welfare of his dearest Aurelia, was ready to sink down, but dissembling his grief, told Duratus, who took her to be Thalia indeed, that she supposed he did not mean to perform any thing he had said, but spake it only to try her disposition, and to entertain her, which he vow'd was not so, but with heavy Curses might light upon him, if it were not his full intent; and further to assure her therof, he told her that it was he that kill'd Aristeus, though it was laid to the charge of Esculenus Family; Thalia having now as much as she desired, promised him to perform his will, and fulfill his purpose in every point, which he believing, departed: the next day Duratus came with flattering speeches to Aurelia, and making a large Narration of his great care, study, and desire of her welfare, he acquainted her that he thought it would be very expedient for her bodily health, to remove into the freh ayr, and remain for some space in the Lodge, which should be prepared to entertain her, and nothing should be wanting to accomodate her while she staid; she nothing mistrusting his villanious intentions, gave him thanks, and promised to take his Counsel: when the appointed time was come, she was conveyed to the Lodge, having onely Thalia with her, who knowing it now to be high time to disclose the

whole

whole business, and having so convenient an opportunity, he declared all that Duratus had said and done, with his purpose in sending her thither to be poyson'd, having by his own confession acknowledged himself the Author of Aristeus death: this did exceedingly amaze Aurelia, not knowing whether she might give credit to the words of her supposed Thalia, but Thalia to put her out of all doubt, revealed himself, and gave her assurance that he was Antonius, who destitute of all other means, had undertaken that hazard to purchase her favour, which then she could not but grant, knowing that he had abundantly deserved her love; so changing her former opinion concerning him, as being a Foe, and receiving him now as the only preserver of her life, she committed her self wholly to his protection, her heart being firmly united unto him in the bands of inseparable affection: three days after Duratus came and brought the glass of Poyson, which he delivered to Thalia desiring her to give it Aurelia the next morning, which he promised to do, but was far from having any such intent, for he gently conveyed Aurelia to Melanias house, where she continued secure, till within a short space the Murther was miraculously found out, and Duratus being by his own confession, the only actor thereof, was Condemned to be Hang'd, Drawn, and Quartered; after the Execution of which Sentence upon him, Antonius was with great Solemnity Married to Aurelia, spending the remainder of their days in perfect Unity and Tranquillity, by which means they procured an inseparable and perpetual League of Friendship between their two Families.

FINIS.